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## Interview with Billy Sanders Gibson and Glenda (Webb) "Gaye" Gibson (MSS 707)

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4/16/12

Transcript of Interview of Billy and Glenda "Gaye" Gibson  
Home of Billy and Glenda Gibson

LeSieur: Alright, it's April 16, I'm sitting here at the home of Mr. Billy Gibson and I'm going to ask him a few questions about Kyrock. So, just starting off, now you said just a minute ago you didn't actually grow up at Kyrock...

Billy: No, we moved down here in '31.

LeSieur: Okay.

Billy: I lived at Kyrock for about, less than a year.

LeSieur: Okay, so did you all...

Billy: Then we moved here, but my father still worked there.

LeSieur: Okay, so your father worked for the company?

Billy: Yeah.

LeSieur: Okay, did you all ever attend any church services or anything like that at Kyrock?

Billy: I didn't. Not that I can remind. They might have took me in their arms. But my mother did with some of the other children. To the old church under the hill there.

LeSieur: Okay now when you say under the hill, what do you mean, is that another word for Kyrock?

Billy: Yeah, old Kyrock, old Kyrock is what we call it, you know.

LeSieur: So they would call that under the hill.

Billy: Yeah, see when they built the new school, they brought her down on top of the hill, we called it, at Sweeden. Then they brought the quarry up, the asphalt and all, the chrusher and all up to Sweeden community from out and under the Kyrock.

LeSieur: I'm just looking on my list here. So did you, when your family moved here and your dad worked for the company, did you all live in a company house?

Billy: Yes.

LeSieur: So you kind of, how old would you have been?

Billy: I was less than a year old.

LeSieur: Oh okay, so do you remember growing up in that house at all?

Billy: No, no, no.

LeSieur: You don't, okay. So you all...

Billy: I just know what they told me, you know.

LeSieur: Okay.

Billy: See, my father was from Russellville, Alabama. And when Kentucky Rock Asphalt Company started in the 20's or whenever, best I can remember it was in the 20's. And He must've come up here around '21 around there. And he was a machinist, and his father was a mine foreman in the iron mines in Russellville, Alabama. And they growed up in those mines down there and they were playing it out and when Mr. Carmichael came and opened this up, he could get all the labor he wanted, but he needed skill labor, so he went down and he got people, he got several families from out of that Russellville, Alabama. He got the Bunnell's, he got the McDougals, he got the Chamber's, and just a number of families that had some kind of skill, see. And my grandfather came first and my dad and two of my uncles and then they didn't stay, they went back. And my father stayed, and then...

LeSieur: So they were, you know, they were bringing people in that had certain skills...

Billy: Right, electricians and machinists and

Gaye: Mechanics (from other room)

Billy: Mechanics of different types, you know, that they had to do on their machinery and of course back then, you know, blacksmith was, they done a lot of work.

LeSieur: So I guess my next question is, you know, when did you all move away from Kyrock, when...

Billy: In 19 and 30. We moved out of the little town of Kyrock in 30 and 1931.

LeSieur: Okay, so you were there for just a little while.

Billy: Just a little while, yeah.

LeSieur: So, did your dad still work for the company?

Billy: Yeah, he stayed there til up in the forties. Then he went back down in Alabama when work came along and he got a lot better job, you know. So, he went to work down in Russellville, Alabama.

LeSieur: What kind of mines were there in Russellville, Alabama?

Billy: They were iron mines.

LeSieur: Iron mines? Okay. Was that?... Would you consider, I don't know anything about iron mining, of course I've studied asphalt mining, but is it similar?

Billy: Well, they got it out of the ground, you know, and they had to have smelt it, just like, you know the asphalt, you know, they just mined it and crushed it.

LeSieur: Yeah.

Billy: And then heated it up.

LeSieur: Alright, well, then, I guess my... I've just got a couple more questions for you, you know, how did you come by getting all this stuff?

Billy: Well, this was my dad's and mother's.

LeSieur: Okay.

Glenda: And my dad's and mother's.

Billy: Yeah, her dad was a Webb and they all worked at Kyrock over the years.

LeSieur: Okay.

Billy: But, uh...

Glenda: He worked after they retired...

Billy: Now, see, this is what I call under the hill when they first started out at old Kyrock. See, Carmichael, you'd have to know, Carmichael was a man before his time, really. He was an intelligent man. He come in here and done all this, you know. And, of course, that was down where the old high school... see, he built a high school and all down there. And, uh, that's the old commissary; it was under what we called under down in old Kyrock and there was a little hospital like. And this is what we called River Road, up through here, and there's Nolin River coming down.

LeSieur: I've never seen these pictures; those are good.

Billy: And, uh, this was the old Kyrock landing, where the steamboats and everything... they'd bring the barges up Green and, then, get into Nolin and go up Nolin til they'd come into the Kyrock harbor.

LeSieur: Okay.

Billy: And then they'd bring all them up in the canal like, we called it, and I'll show you a picture here, uh, I think I've got one in here somewhere, where it shows... see there's the old Logan, that's what they called the Logan steamboat that moved the barges up there around. See, this is, see, they crushed it up here.

LeSieur: Okay.

Billy: They crushed the asphalt up here and it went down through here and they run a barge in under there and loaded the barges with asphalt.

LeSieur: Okay.

LeSieur: Would this have been, Quarry #4. Is that have been the main quarry up on the hill?

Billy: Well, yeah, I'd say that was the one... I don't know the number, there were so many quarries and, uh, that's part of your old crusher, you know, that crushes it up. And that says the old way, when they used to...

LeSieur: Do it by hand?

Billy: blast it out and crack them up. And, then, after they got the big crushers, they started where they got to where they could crush a pretty good size rock. And there's some of the old quarries. Uh, Nolin

River, Kyrock. And, there's one... bird's eye view of Kyrock, Kentucky. See that was under, what we called, under the hill.

LeSieur: So, this would have probably been, which community, would this have been Woodside or Ridgedale?

Billy: It would've been Ridgedale, I guess.

LeSieur: Okay. I've heard there were a lot of houses in Ridgedale.

Billy: Yeah. Yeah, they was... I've often wondered how many houses... I don't guess they ever did really know. They had houses everywhere.

LeSieur: I haven't... I haven't been able...

Billy: A lot of times, two families would live in one house, you know. They was growing so fast.

Glenda: Some of these pictures, I think has got the date on it, don't they? I know that's my grandfather in 19 and 29. That's the drill they used to drill for the...

LeSieur: Oh, okay...

Billy: To find where the asphalt was at. This says year of 19 and 37.

LeSieur: Is this another picture of the crusher, right here?

Billy: That's the big thing that pulled it, you know. It run off of belts, of course, back then.

LeSieur: Okay, that's really big. I like that there's the guy standing there... Is that somebody that you all knew?

Billy: I've asked several people. I wished I'd have asked my mother and dad more questions, you know, but, I've took this to Kyrock Day a couple of times and nobody's ever told me who that is.

LeSieur: Nobody knows?

Billy: But, I'd say it's one of the superintendents or...

LeSieur: Yeah, I'd say by the way he's dressed, he was probably kind of higher up.

Glenda: I was going to show you, I've looked through them a while ago, and I saw in here it said they was several of the superintendents.

Billy: Yeah, that's Henry right there.

Glenda: Yeah, and they was one called Sharley, or Charles.

LeSieur:

Billy: John Henretta was a superintendent under Carmichael.

Glenda: I was trying to find that one of all the superintendents. Did you see it?

Billy: Nuh, uh.

Glenda: And my dad drove a Dinky like that, he, old number 19, I never will forget that.

LeSieur: Okay.

Billy: That's Mr. Henretta, he's stuck up in his Model A.

Glenda: That's when they was building the...

Billy: See that's what my uncles always told me they couldn't go anywhere they'd get stuck so they just went back to Alabama.

LeSieur: Okay.

Glenda: I know I saw that picture a while ago when I was. I was born in '35, so this is '37, so I can't remember.

LeSieur: So did you grow up in Kyrock?

Glenda: I grew up in Sweeden. Out that log hotel, well I was borned out that log hotel room but they moved to black gold. So, I grew up in Black Gold.

LeSieur: how long did your dad work for the company?

Glenda: He worked there all his life until...

LeSieur: He passed away.

Billy: I'd say most of them worked

Glenda: Well it tells right here.

Billy: Yeah, engineering corps. Bill Garvin, in charge, quarry superintend, Henrietta, plant superintend, walter sally, I remember them talking about walter sally, and commissary manager, H O M, I don't know him. And in front of the new laboratory at the, that was the black gold quarry.

Glenda: Yeah, most of that book is about the black gold quarry.

LeSieur: Okay.

Billy: Yeah, but, see this gives you like a number 102 shovel course at that time, you know these were modern things.

LeSieur: Oh yeah. So is this what you'd call a derrick?

Billy: that's what they call a shovel I guess, a derrick or a shovel.

Glenda: They called that ol shovel 96 and 101, I think they just must've had two of them.

Billy: I think this is just one of the little dinkies they called them, here. They had tracks, see and they'd load them up.

LeSieur: You might be able to answer this, I've read that when they were working in the quarries they'd have to keep moving the tracks or just keep building them...just depending on where they were mining.

Billy: Yeah, they had to. They had to move them to where they could load them the quickest, these. And of course, they had tracks, see they had the Indian creek quarry, they had the black gold quarry, they had the number 1 Kyrock quarry and...

Glenda: One of them talks about the beaver dam quarry, where's that?

Billy: I don't know, see there's a beaver dam creek.

Glenda: See this lady, she was the secretary, she wrote on all these pictures and...

LeSieur: So was that book, would that book have been owned by the Kyrock company at one point.

Both: yeah.

Glenda: she was the secretary, Mrs. Tilly and wasn't there another...

Billy: Yeah...can you remember. Well, I know you can't remember Mrs. Tilly. She was one of the 1st ones that stayed over in the office in Brownsville.

LeSieur: And do you know when they built this office over in Brownsville, or why, I don't even know...

Billy: Well, see, it was, what would you say that built that in...I'd just have to guess. But I can remember when they built it.

Glenda: I can too.

Billy: I guess the convenience of being there at Brownsville maybe, or you know,

Glenda: that was after they moved everything out from down under the hill at the Kyrock wasn't it.

Billy: I don't know, it was when they moved the quarry all the crushing up there. See you know where the Kyrock fire dept. is now? Okay that's where the old crusher sat right in there, the last one they had. And down under that little hill there they had a stack of asphalt I, theres a picture of it somewhere, oh it was 50 foot high, I guess.

LeSieur: Yeah, Ive seen pictures of the plant in bowling green, is that the one youre talking about where they'd have those huge piles...

Billy: Yeah, well they had 'em here too. I think that's it. See that one might be Bowling Green there.

LeSieur: Lets look at it. Lets see.

Billy: I know they's one in there that says the bowling green quarry that ive seen.

Glenda: Here this is it.

Billy: Yeah. Loading material for...

Glenda: White blend, I don't know what that was.

Billy: White gold blend, bowling green.

Glenda: See there's the one in Bowling green where they stockpiled it and put it on the railroad cars.

LeSieur: Its got the sign in there, too that's neat.

Glenda: They, see they, moved it out from under, when they quit shipping on barges, they started shipping on trucks, that's when they moved the crusher out to the top of the hill in Sweeden.

LeSieur: And that would've been in the 40's or early 50's.

Glenda: I guess it would be in the, about '48, that's when your dad went to Alabama, wasn't it?

Billy: No he went in the early '40s.

Glenda: When they quit shipping by barges they moved it up to the, they started to buy trucks...

Billy: I graduated from high school in '49-'50 and theys already moving it on up on the hill. I worked a year for them, when I got out of high school I worked a year for them.

LeSieur: What did you do?

Billy: I drove a truck and just odd jobs. I drove a truck in the quarry and a truck on the road some hauling to rocky hill. I just, 18-19 year old.

LeSieur: And would they ship on the train from rocky hill to bowling green?

Billy: Yeah, they had a place you just pull up and dump right into the box cars. And then they'd ship it on. This is the partial view of the plant and office at Kyrock, Kentucky.

LeSieur: I've seen this picture before but its always blown up and been copied a bunch of times too so that's kind of neat.

Glenda: see, after my dad finished after Kyrock sold to the Reynolds, he worked for him until he died.

Billy:

LeSieur: So he still worked for Reynolds after that.

Glenda: they went after several, trying to get the oil out of...

Billy: called it gripstop, called it, at one time tried to get some, then they took steam and put down into the, where the asphalt was under the ground and tried to push the oil to the top of the ground, they did, the tried to shell, had something with shell oil company, some kind of a contract and they tried to produce something it never did work out, I don't know what...

LeSieur: Well, they're still mining up there I understand.

Billy: Yeah, they opened up a mind up there its just

Glenda: it's the old tunnels

LeSieur: The Indian creek there

Billy: Yeah, the Indian creek quarry. Yeah, that's where they had the tunnels. That's the only tunnels that hey ever mined from under there.

LeSieur: Everything else was like stripped?

Billy: Yeah, stripped. They had the tunnels at the Indian creek.

LeSieur: Now whats this a picture of again.

Glenda: That's the drill

Billy: That's how they drilled down and see how much, how many foot of asphalt they had under the ground. See they had,...

Glenda: They called it core drilling...

Billy: See, theys asphalt all over, all over, you know, this, the got down the mineral rights back in here, see. Yeah, they would drill down and if they had 25 foot of saphalt or 50 foot or whatever they had.

LeSieur: And that was called core drilling?

Billy: Core drilling, yeah. And they would pull this with mules and stuff wherever they needed it. They'd hook onto it and pull it.

Glenda: That's dad.

Billy: Yeah, that's her dad.

Glenda: that's the old black gold

Billy: That's the old mine there, but

LeSieur: And what was your dad's name?

Glenda: Alton Webb. And that was my grandfather, Walter Webb there, he run the core drill. I think they only had one core drill didn't they.

Billy: I don't know at that time.

LeSieur: Is that him on the left there?

Glenda: right there.

Billy: I don't know who the other man is.

Glenda: I know he's a Lindsey, but I don't know whether he's genevas dad or who...

Billy: Might've been Ezra Lindsey then.

Glenda: I don't know whether he was old enough then or...

LeSieur:

Billy: I don't know they just you might've saw a lot of these pictures, see now this right here, see that's like I said, that's Nolin and they had this, what they call a canal, the harbor and the canal and they come down and see this is the road that went up to the, and theys houses all up in through here, Carmichaels house was right up in here and then that they had a hotel right here and then of course this was the big, main commissary, they had about three commissaries at one time. And but this was the main one and then this spring that they're talking about where the water, the sweet springs, its right up in here, that's where that's at. And this is where their stables was at before, when they had all their mules and horses ans stuff, they kept them all over there.

LeSieur: Now I've heard, kind of looking this was, I've hear there was a baseball field here..

Billy: Yeah, on up, you went on up and kind of around this field here. Its, the fields are still there, of course, ain't no resemblance of baseball fields, but Bill Layne owns that.

LeSieur: I've heard that was called ball diamond hill for that reason.

Billy: Yeah, probably was. And they had a little water tower up on that hill there too. See that sweet springs provided water for everybody up there.

Glenda: They had a real baseball team.

LeSieur: Yeah, I've seen a lot of pictures of the sports. So they, talking about the spring, they would've pumped water up into that tank up the hill and that would've come down to people's houses?

Billy: Yeah, yeah, yeah. And then they had a big water tank up in here somewhere, its still standing up there.

LeSieur: Yeah, the big metal one?

Billy: Yeah, its still standing up there.

LeSieur: Yeah, I had a funny story with one of the people I interviewed one day about how they snuck out of school one day and was aimed to climb that

Billy: Yeah.

LeSieur: I don't think they got very far.

Glenda: Who have you talked to, maybe I can tell you some stories.

LeSieur: I've talked to Orene Vincent, of course she went to school at Kyrock, talked to Dr. Ashley, just up the road here, and Madge Lashley.

Glenda: Madge is one of the older graduates of Kyrock.

Billy: Cardwell, Madge Cardwell. See her dad was one of the last one s that lived in the company house.

LeSieur: That's what she told me.

Billy: Yeah, Mr. and Mrs. Cardwell.

LeSieur: I think his house was probably the last one that was standing wasn't it?

Billy: Yeah, last one standing and now its gone. So they's nothing, theres no houses that I know of that Kyrock built that are left. And I've tended, well, most all of the Kyrock days that they, and nobody ever did know exactly how many houses there were. I guess they just put them up so fast, you know and everything.

LeSieur: Yeah, Dr. Ashley was telling me that even as a kid he said he never really played with kids in Ridgedale cause he was from Woodside. He said there was not a lot of, you know, he just didn't go over there, he just played with people in his community.

Both: Yeah.

Glenda: Well, see I lived in the black gold area, and it was another little, see they was little houses all up and down those railroad tracks. Company houses. I don't know they worked that out whether they paid rent or whether they held it out of their checks.

Billy: Oh they lived...they didn't pay rent.

Glenda: So I don't know.

Billy: No they take that out of their wages or worked it out somehow, I guess you got to lived there if you worked there.

LeSieur: Well another thing that's come up in my research in talking about the commissaries and you know when people weren't working in the winter time, you would get a script, right

Both: yes.

LeSieur: How did that work, I mean you all probably, do you remember through your partents?

Billy: Well you went in and bought a bag of potatoes, some beans, you know or whatever you go, they'd put you down and give you a bill of it and when you started back working they'd hold it out of your check so much whatever you agreed to I guess. Course different people made different wages. My dad he was making a lot like 50 cents an hour when most people up there was making 50 to 75 cents a day, see, because he was a machinist, and the only one they had.

LeSieur: And he was a specialist?

Billy: Yeah, the only one they had and I had an old stub of his check but I don't know whatever happened to it. See you didn't think about keeping this stuff and stuff, but.

Glenda: We wouldn't have it if it wasn't for his mom and my dad kept some of this stuff.

LeSieur: Well that's one thing that I've learned as an anthropologist, is you know, kind of in thinking about my life today, is what do we keep, you know, what am I going to show my kids about my life, its just...

Billy: See, my mother lived to be 97 and her mind was good til she was 95. Do you remember Tish, tish Gibson.

LeSieur: I don't think I do.

Billy: She was a cook, she was a cook over there in school.

LeSieur: I shold remember her.

She might've retired before he got into grade school.

Billy: How old are you now?

LeSieur: I'm 25.

Billy: Oh yeah. See her and Mrs. Meredith, Lloyd Meredith if you know her, his wife was a cook and Beulah Moody. Beulah played the French harp, they'd play for the kids. That was back when they run the cafeteria like they wanted to run it. And LG Wood was the principal.

LeSieur: Well, I know LG because of Matt and them. Im friends with, best friends with Matt and Dex Wood, too. I grew up with them, you know, we've been friends since I can remember.

(This part of recording not transcribed due to irrelevancy).

LeSieur: Well, lets, what do y'all got in this box over here.

Glenda: This is...

Billy: This is when they come out with the, all the, when they had the thing up there at Kyrock from the graduating classes and they recognized everybody

Glenda: But this is mostly Billy's pictures. I didn't know that they weren't Kyrock pictures, but they, he says they're not.

(Not transcribed due to irrelevancy-talking about baseball teams in the area, not Kyrock. The only important thing here is that three of the players on the team were from Kyrock, Johnny Carmichael and Hugh Bunnell-Walter Bunnell's son)



Billy: Carmichael, see he was a baseball man, he brought people in, I can tell ya they had some real teams at Kyrock.

LeSieur: I've heard a lot about how good the teams were.

Billy: Oh they brought teams in from everywhere to play Kyrock. They had a big program up there.

LeSieur: So what kind of sports, you know they had baseball, did they have a basketball team?

Glenda: They had the basketball and didn't have a gym...

Billy: Under the hill they never did have a gym, and indoor gym, they played on ...

Glenda: I went one year under the hill to that shool.

LeSieur: What can you, do you remember, what grade were you in when you went..

Glenda: 7<sup>th</sup>

LeSieur: Okay, what do you remember about the school?

Glenda: I just remember it was a three room school. You know, it was like long and had a room out this side, but at one time they had grade school in the one room. But I know when it snowed we had to walk all the way out from under the hill to Sweeden because the bus couldn't get down there.

LeSieur: Okay, was it still a gravel road, then?

Glenda: It was a gravel road.

LeSieur: That's interesting to me that they had gravel roads out there when they were mining asphalt.

Billy: I guess you're familiar with where the old church sat up on the hill?

LeSieur: Oh yeah.

Billy: And then where the school set then across the road down under the hill. You know, Ive often wandered why he picked that place for them schools right there on that hill, I guess, he...you know, cause they was some level ground on up a little further.

LeSieur: That's one thing I haven't ever been shown where the school is. One thing I am doing, I'm an archaeologist, too and we're working with butch and we've documented the church and we're working with the Carmichael house and we're working with the spring site and he's never shown me where the school is, but I was looking one day and I noticed there was a road bed running right behind the church there, and just from what people've told me I'm assuming, was that the school right down the hill there...

Both: No

Billy: No, where the church was on the hill, the road goes, the church sets over here and heres the road down here, it was on the other side of the road from the church.

Glenda: Have you seen the posts where the old swining bridge was?

LeSieur: Yes.

Glenda: Okay its on the same side of the road coming up the hill toward Sweeden as that.

Billy: Its on the same side of the road as the swinging bridge. And see that swinging bridge that you went across, it went over to this big crushing, when they first started down there

LeSieur: The main quarries up there

Billy: yeah, where that big water tank is. My mother said she would you know walk that swining bridge and take my dad's lunch sometimes up there.

LeSieur: Really? This is kind of, and I don't, I'm not a very good drawer, but could you draw me kind of, lets see, lets think about, say the church is about right here, we'll draw an x for the church, can you draw the road as it used to be and the best you can remember, show me kind of where the school was.

Billy: Okay, well, this is Sweeden. And of course, you know, the old log hotel road, you know, are you familiar with that?

LeSieur: No.

Billy: Well that's, see they put the new road, we call it the new road, now that goes down to the spring where if you've been down there lately, alright theys a road that cuts off there at Sweeden and goes down through there like that and goes down and under the hill

Glenda: Alright, now show him..

Billy: Okay, the old lane store, do you know where the old lane store was at. Okay, well theres a road right across the road, like this was lane's store. They's a road that went out through here like this and come down into this road. And the log hotel was out here.

LeSieur: So this would've been woodside, somewhere in here.

Billy: Yeah, Log hotel was right in here. And Dr. Cornwell's office, he was a doctor. He had a little office right there and that was the only road there was and later on they built this one down. And you had your church here and you had your schools on over here as you went down this hill to go across to where the, like this is the sweet springs up this road here, the schools was right in here.

Glenda: Its just a lot of light posts.

Billy: Yeah, theys nothing there, there might be a little foundation.

Glenda: Electric posts is what I was trying to say, electric lines.

Billy: Well, some time, well butch can show ya, he knows, hes not as old as I am. Now Bill JAggers hes about the the oldest living one that knows about it, besides Cardwell, Madge. Bill lived in that was Ridgedale, see, down in the main Kyrock. Bill lived in Ridgedale. Pretty sure he was raised right in there before you got to that church.

LeSieur: So Ridgedale's right in here.

Billy: Yeah. And see Woodside come around over the hill there like I showed you right there, that was old Woodside going out through there and Ridgedale and then you had, what was that other one on up the hill there, Woodside, Ridgedale, well its in that book

Glenda: River row

Billy: Well they had river row, but they, there was houses all the way up river road

LeSieur: So river road, the river's over here, river road would've run through here...

Billy: Yeah, this is a pretty good view of river, this is river row. Right up through here. And this goes up like I said to that, where the baseball diamond was and up there and the schools was up in here somewhere.

Madge: Did Madge have any pictures she could show you?

LeSieur: She had a picture of the church, that was about it.

Billy: Now my mother would tell me about taking Wilbur and Wayne and Jack and Warren to church up there, to Sunday school back then, but I couldn't, I remember the church...

Glenda: Oh, I remember the church well

Billy: But I never as in it

LeSieur: Did you go to church there?

Glenda: No, but I walked by it going to school every day. It stayed for a while after they closed that down there.

Billy: Back when I went to, started going to high school up there, see I went to Brownsville and down there, I graduated from Kyrock. They come out and built that school up on the hill and of course I played ball and they wanted me to come up there and play ball. And where we're at here, see at that time, the school bus run 70 to 259 out here and the Kyrock bus run right up here and went and we was in between, so we could go either place.

LeSieur: So yall had to either walk one way or the other?

Billy: Yeah.

LeSieur: Okay. Well, I'll ask you all both and if you all can answer separately, I'll ask you first, Billy, and you may not be able to answer this, but just from what your parents told you, what was the sense of community like at Kyrock, you know, was it a close community, did people help each other out, or...

Billy: Yes. Like I say there was two families that lived some time, Momma tell me about that they had to let people live, let people move in sometimes that didn't have them a plae, until they built them a place, different things like that you know...

LeSieur: SO everybody helped everybody out.

Billy: Everybody helped everybody, it was hard times back then. And, you know, its just surviving, really. Of course I don't know what their wages was back then, but I've heard them say like 25 and 30 cents an hour to start with.

Glenda: Well, I've heard my dad say that when I was born in '35 that he would walk 10 miles and get paid 50 cents a day. And

Billy: He wasn't working at Kyrock then..

Glenda: No I think he was working for a coal company around Bee Spring or something.

LeSieur: Okay, well, what about you, do you remember anything else about just the sense of community just at Kyrock and so for...

Glenda: Well, see, like I, I didn't live at the Kyrock, I lived at Black Gold, and that was another quarry and it was just like one big family, everybody knew everybody and you was in and out of their houses.

LeSieur: Well, especially I would think in a lot of those outlying communities where you were still, you know I would still consider that part of Kyrock, but you know, you all were pretty far away, so I'm assuming were all pretty close.

Glenda: We al lhad our little school sthat we went to and they all had their own little schools

Billy: See they had a school they called Bungalow.

Glenda: Well, they called it in them pictures little mountain school.

Billy: Did they, well that's the old name of that road isn't it? Well, it was old black gold and bungalow, I don't know where they got all them name.

LeSieur: They just had different names for everything.

Billy: Then Sweeden had a school.

Glenda: they had a 2 room school, so they were kind of up...

Billy: You know when you turn off to go down like you go down to under the spring now, on the right hand side, before you turn, sweeden school was in there

Glenda: where that building is now, I don't know who's building it is now

LeSieur: would there have been competition, you know, between these schools? You know, I went to Brownsville and you know when I was going up and it was like Kyrock, they were just our big rivals...

Both: Yeah

Glenda: See in baseball and basketball it was like big competition. I know this one guy that after I grew up he said, we used to, this was, they had a little school down on grassland road, he said we used to hate to come to the little mountain schools, he said, all them little Webb boys were the best basketball players. You know they had to be 15 and 16 and still in grade school (laughter)

LeSieur: Yeah, that's funny. I'm trying to think of anything else I need to ask you all. Do you all know anything about the spring itself. I mean, I 've heard that people even after the company closed people were still getting water out of there.

Glenda: 2 of my uncles, sold water, hauled water from there for years and sold it

LeSieur: And this would've been after the company closed?

Glenda: Yeah after they closed.

Billy: And they had tankers on their trucks and they'd haul it and put it in your cistern for so much a load. They hauled it there for ya. And they say that they could, what they'd tell me, somebody the other day was telling me they'd put so many gallons in a certain amt.t of time, boy it had a stream...

LeSieur: Yeah, I've measured it, the last time I was up there. Even if its not been raining it runs...

Glenda: Oh yeah.

LeSieur: Its like, 2, I can't remember what the exact numbers was but its really fast...

Billy: Well, its hard to imagine for all them people that lived at Kyrock furnishing water for them. I guess they furnished most of them. I Don't guess any of them had any wells probably. What I hear, what most of them used come out of that sweet springs.

LeSieur: So most everybody had some sort of running water, not necessarily in the house, but...

Billy: outside, they'd have a hydrant or something, you know.

LeSieur: And its good water, too, I've heard.

Glenda: Oh yeah, we used to go get it in jugs you know.

LeSieur: Yeah, I've tried it, and every time I'm down there I'll get me a little drink out of it and it tastes better than what you get out of the tap.

Glenda: Its not very good out of the tap, unless you filter it.

Billy: I reckon I heard that distillery went through I don't know whether that's true or not.

LeSieur: I've heard a lot of talk about it, I don't know...

Billy: I heard it got approved, so they must be going to still some liquor there.

LeSieur: I've heard butch talk about it, but you know, I'm more focused on the past than. Well are there any other, you know, are there any questions you have for me before...

Billy: Well, I don't, no, like I say, I wish, see, you'd ever write down...when I first started going to Kyrock day, some of the old ones was still living that would come occasionally and their minds were good that could've told you a lot of stuff you know, about it.

LeSieur: That's another thing that I wanted to ask you about, you know, Kyrock days, you know, when did those start?

Billy: Its always the 1<sup>st</sup> Sunday in June. That's normally when they have it. Isn't it the 1<sup>st</sup> Sunday in june, I believe. Its when Sweeden (mumbles).

Glenda: they changed it.

Billy: Butch knows.

Glenda: He's the one that started it...

Billy: He didn't start it but he kept it going after he bought that place up there. Madge and them got it started.

LeSieur: So even after the company closed and al these people started moving out there was still a sense of you know all these people...

Glenda: They came back

Billy: Oh yeah, when we first started having it, we'd have a big crowd. The first one that we had, that I remember, we had it in tailwaters, they call it. Then we moved it up to where Madge and them was raised in where them company houses were there. Like Romber Lindsey like over there in Brownsville, he was living. He was in Kyrock. I've read about him playing ball at Kyrock. Romer was a good ball player. That's Mrs. Jessie's you know and them, well, married Mrs. Jessie's sister Ruth.

LeSieur: I know Mrs. Jessie, I used to be her neighbory.

Billy: Mrs. Jessie, yeah 99 year old.

LeSieur: We had the same birthday actually. Yeah, We were always good friends. Well I guess that's all unless do you all have any other fond memories that maybe your parents told you or funny stories, or sad stories, anything that you know...

Glenda: pertaining to Kyrock? I, the only, this is one story I remember that when dad would come in from work he looked just like a colored man when he drove the dinky, I mean, he was just black from heat to toe.

LeSieur: just from the dust....

Glenda: that sticks in my mind, you know, him coming in from work and how black he was.

Billy: Yeah, it was dust.

LeSieur: Have to wash up before dinner, I guess.

(Laughter)

Glenda: And you know I can't remember really a lot pertaining to, I know when I went to Kyrock school that one year, JP Alexander was principal and there was a Skaggs man

Billy: Riley Skaggs

Glenda: He was a teacher too or....

Billy: John Lane was principal for a while

Glenda: But that was up on the hill

Billy: Well John was under the hill for a while wasn't he?

Glenda: No, John was up on the hill.

Billy: And then Maltby Woods got killed in a motorcycle accident there in Brownsville, he was a teacher there at Kyrock, under the hill and a baseball, basketball coach at one time. He was Chet Woods and them's brothers. Oh he got killed young.

Glenda: I can't think of anybody that would have any old pictures...

Billy: but see those kids, when they played ball like under the hill, like where we're talking about at the Kyrock school there under the hill, they would walk from everywhere, all the way to the baseball field, which was probably a mile or longer.

Glenda: it was at least a mile

Billy: Down the hill and through the hill. I mean if you've ever gone down there and over...

LeSieur: Yeah, I've walked up that hill a couple of times.

Billy: Course that book, if you've read that Kyrock book, it tells you a lot about...

Glenda: Geraldine Ashley is one of the older ones that graduated...

LeSieur: I haven't heard her name before.

Glenda: Geraldine Ashley, lives over there in Lindseyville, and Suzy would know her. She might have some you know information.

Billy: She was cheerleader under the hill and played on the girls basketball team under the hill.

LeSieur: Well, I think I'm going to cut the recording off you know if there's nothing else. If you don't mind, I'm going to take some pictures of all the things here. I think you all have more pictures than anybody I've talked to so that's always good. Its pictures are hard to come by.

Billy: Well, see, I've kicked myself a thousand times, but you know just like the Brownsville office up there. See when after Kyrock liquidated and this Reynolds bought everything, they bought the old office and all, well her dad went to work for them and I was over there and they was all kind of stuff over there, they was all kind of pictures. And instead of me getting them...

Glenda: they didn't care. They didn't want them.

Billy: I guess they done (mumble) burn up, whatever. They had little asphalt with Kyrock on it..

Glenda: And I've got one of them.

LeSieur: They have some of those at the school.

Billy: They had different things over there and I didn't get none of it.

LeSieur: I think Butch ended up with some of it, I think some of it was in the Carmichael house or he said somebody gave him some pictures, cause he gave me a box of pictures that we scanned into the computer and there was a point when I just, at about 300 pictures I said we can't scan anymore of these...

Billy: He's been wanting to get mind. I don't know if he got them and took pictures of them or not, but I take them, the last few times that I went to Kyrock....

(This part of interview not transcribed-me telling them that they should donate their pictures to the Kentucky Library and Billy asking me if I knew when the company opened up)

Billy: See my dad married twice. His first wife died at Kyrock, she took the measles or one of those things back then that you know wasn't any doctors much and she died up there and they had three children and my oldest brother would've been my half brother, but it didn't, because after dad married again we were all raised together. But He told me that they took his mother and they took her to Rocky hill and put her on a train and they got on a train and rode down to Russellville Alabama with her. I go down there every year to the cemetery my dad's buried down there. See when we went back down there in the early 40's he got killed in a car wreck down there in '48. So we buried him down there and I

go to the cemetery down there, but anyway, Jack told me that they put her on a train and took her down there. Then he came back and went back to work and the best I can remember him and mom must've got married around '24 '5 somewhere around there.

LeSieur: So your mom was from the Kyrock.

Billy: She was from here, and they had some children and then in 19 and 35 my grandfather who was down there he passed away and they lived in a company house in those iron mines. And of course after he passed away they had to give up the company house and she come, my grandmother come and live with us after that and she stayed with us until after she died. And grandma Gibson lived with us for years. I don't know, probably from '36 I don't know how long after grandpa died. I was 4 year old, but I can just remember, because I guess it was something you know going that far and them having him laid out in the house in the company house and I can remember a little bit about it. But the best I can figure I'd love to, wish I would've asked my uncles now, but they must come up here about 1920 in that area, cause Carmichael was going everywhere like I told you getting these people

Glenda: Experience trade...

LeSieur: From the best I can tell, the company kind of boomed in the late 20's, early 30's, they were at their height in that point.

Billy: From I'd say, from in the '22s to up the early 30's, during the depression, you know..it kept people eating. Dad must've worked there at least probably 25 years or longer. Or at least. He probably worked there over 20 years.

LeSieur: Would you all say, and this will be my last question, I promise. Would you all say that the company treated the employees good, I mean, I know with a lot of the coal companies you see a lot of resentment between the employees, and...

Glenda: Seemed to be, seemed to be everybody was happy with it. They thought the world of Carmichael...

Billy: Carmichael treated everybody right. Now what old timers that told me what I know back then they said that if you went to him, course like we're talking about (mumbles), if you went to him and said listen, I've got to have a job, he'd make you a job out of nothing than carrying water. I've heard people tell me that. If you had a couple of kids and you needed, and if you needed a place to live. Now I've heard that. And I read of course (mumbles)

Glenda: Of course, my people never did live in a company house. My grandfather had a farm and my dad bought a few acres off of him and built, I never did live in a company house.

Billy: Was that a company house at Sweeden where Pearle Walker lived?

Glenda: I don't think it was, I think it was his mom and dad's house. Now it could've been a company house, I don't know.

Billy: It was right there among them.

Glenda: Because your mom and dad when they moved out and bought the place at black gold, your mom and dad moved into the house for a while.

Billy: That's where they had some other people lived with them, there.

Glenda: Well, they lived with grandma and grandpa for a little whiel you mother said.

LeSieur: well, I guess that, well call it a....

Billy: What is that other community, I....Ridgedale, Woodside...

Glenda: it takes both of us to tell a story.

LeSieur: Its okay, I like that. It makes for more interesting stories, I think.

Billy; You've probably heard the names, I'm sure. They had one they called the sweet spring. But they wasn't many houses up through there.

LeSieur: Madge told me that was where she was born but a lot of people moved because of the flooding.

Billy: Yeah that was low in there, because where they had the stables I know it was bad. The stables were right across the swinging bridge in that, in there.

LeSieur: Would you maybe be talking about bluetown. So that was up toward river

Billy: That was on up the hill toward the ball park.

LeSieur: River road.

Billy: River Row they called it, R, O, W.

LeSieur: Row, okay.

Billy: Just a row of houses just behind the commissary by the river. And the McDougals, you know old Roy Albert and Wayne McDougal, and them and now, they was raised up that way. They lived in one of them houses up there. And the Chambers they lived up there of course like I say man they had house after house.

LeSieur: Just everywhere through there.

Billy: Yeah, and if you ever get a chance to talk to Bill Jagers, now Bill's about 85-6 somewhere in there and of course he was raised down in there and his dad worked for Kyrck all his life.

Glenda: My dad did too. He worked for them all of his life.

LeSieur: I'll try and get in touch with them. Let me go ahead and cut this off.

Billy: You know Benny Jagers, the school teacher over here in Brownsville, his daddy.

LeSieur: Okay, yeah....